

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-10 and 13-28 are presently pending in this application, Claims 2, 11 and 12 having been canceled and Claims 1, 15, 23 and 25-27 having been amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Funderburg (U.S. Patent 4,228,373); Claims 1-5, 7-11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23 and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Amaya et al. (U.S. Patent 5,955,799) in view of Funderburg and Keller (U.S. Patent 3,584,496); and Claims 6 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Amaya et al. as modified by Funderburg and Keller, and further in view of Barkan (U.S. Patent 5,280,163).

However, Claims 24 and 28 were allowed, and Claims 12-14, 18 and 19 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter.

Amended Claims 1, 15, 23 and 25-27 are fully supported by the specification, drawings and claims as originally filed. Applicants therefore submit that no new matter has been introduced.

Claim 12, which was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form, has been rewritten in independent form as independent Claim 1. Therefore, Claim 1 is believed to be allowable.

Likewise, independent Claims 15, 23 and 25-27 include allowable subject matter substantially similar to what is recited in Claim 1. Thus, Claims 15, 23 and 25-27 are also believed to be allowable.

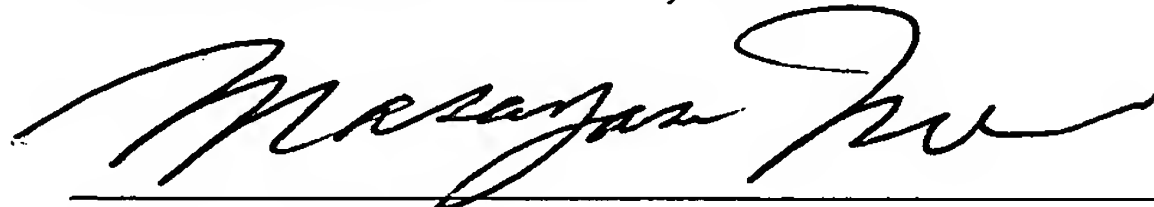
Application No. 10/054,846
Reply to Office Action of March 04, 2004

Claims 3-10 and 13-22 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1, which is believed to be allowable. Hence, Claims 3-10 and 13-22 are believed to be allowable.

In view of the amendments, and in view of the indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Masayasu Mori
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 47,301

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

MM:jm
I:\USER\MSMOR\MEW\217501\217501AMEFINAL.DOC